AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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John Brown Gordon was committed to the mission of national reconciliation. He knew that the South would have to embrace the North to repair the devastation of the Civil War. Driven by dedication to public service after the war, he worked through his positions in governmental offices to help the South. As his public life slowed he began work on a lecture aimed at making him a peacemaker, a missionary for reconciliation. His purpose was to provide a broad, nationalistic perspective which created a common vantage point that would allow both Northerners and Southerners to derive pride and honor from their participation in the Civil War. The lecture, "The Last Days of the Confederacy," became very popular in a short period of time, and made Gordon one of the most requested speakers of the Southern Lyceum Program and Slayton Lyceum Program.

The purpose of this critical interpretation of Gordon's lecture is to account for the effectiveness of the rhetorical elements and strategies in the work. The analysis will be based on Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm. Narratives dominate the content and structure of speech; narratives provide a way of ordering and presenting a view of the world through descriptions of a situation--the act of storytelling--the format Gordon chose in creating the lecture. After drawing conclusions from application of the narrative paradigm I will focus on identifying and evaluating Gordon's rhetorical vision, which is based in Ernest Bormann's fantasy-theme theory. Finally, due to the synecdochal nature of the narratives I will use Kenneth Burke's four master tropes

literature to fully interpret the various aspects of the narrative, which complements the initial mission of narrative criticism.

In "The Last Days of the Confederacy," Gordon masterfully uses anecdotes from his experiences in the Civil War to create narrative sequences, which construct a strategy of transformative discourse. A typical sequence would start with an ingratiary tactic in which Gordon, in his eloquent manner, would describe a Northern character, scene, or theme and juxtapose it to another story from the South. The purpose of this sequence is to generate irony, creating a dialectic between the two stories, which, at the surface, seem to be opposed. His third step, then, was to use that dialectic to point to the commonalities between the North and the South. This he would do by illustrating an American trait, skill, or value. The result would be a major theme demonstrating a national value or belief to add strength to his existing compendium of themes, such as unity, fraternity, and brotherhood--all tools to salve the process of reconciliation of conflict with face-saving for both.

Transforming Sectionalism to Unity Through Narrative in John Brown Gordon's "The Last Days of the Confederacy"

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Transforming Sectionalism to Unity

Through Narrative in John Brown Gordon's

"The Last Days of the Confederacy"

CHAPTER ONE

Prospectus

Introduction

> We have shared the incommunicable experience of war. We have felt, we still feel, the passion of life to its top. . . In our youths, our hearts were touched with fire.
>
> Oliver Wendall Holmes[1]

The winds of reconciliation were beginning to rise as a New South was born out of the reconstruction of the Old. The Industrial South, in the title of an editorial, asked "Shall We Dethrone Our Idols?" and answered with a resounding affirmative.[2] The Vicksburg Herald went so far as to announce, "We are in favor of the South, from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, being thoroughly and permanently Yankeeized."[3] At the forefront of this drive for reconciliation and the re-establishment of national fraternity was John Brown Gordon, a Confederate general, governor of Georgia, and thrice a member of the United States Senate. On November 17, 1893, Gordon delivered a lecture to an audience gathered at the Tabernacle of Brooklyn, entitled "The Last Days of the Confederacy." The effort proved to be so powerful that Gordon was prevailed upon to deliver his lecture the following week at Carnegie Music Hall.[4] With the eloquence of his lecture and personal vivacity, Gordon became a prominent architect in the construction of the New South. He

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1 Geoffrey C. Ward, Ric Burns, and Ken Burns, The Civil War: An Illustrated History (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc, 1990) 394.

2 Industrial South 3 (1885): 2. Cited in C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South (Baton Rouge: Lousisana State University Press, 1951) 151.

3 American II (1886): 166. Cited in Woodward.

4 Ralph Lowell Eckert, John Brown Gordon: Soldier, Southerner, American (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989) 316.

would deliver his lecture hundreds of times over the next decade leading up to his death in 1904.[5]

Problem

The defeat of the Confederacy represents the only time in American history that Americans have lost a war unconditionally.[6] In the South's eyes, its loss represented a victory of Northern values--unionist, industrial materialism--over Southern values--an aristocratic, agrarian society of genteel chivalry.[7] The insult provided a base for bitterness, which tested devotion to reconstruction and reassembly of the fragmented union. Not wanting to let go of their way of life, the Southerners clung to their culture, as it provided the social norms by which they lived. When reconstruction was enforced, Southerners fought against the change, thus creating the myth of the Lost Cause--the retention of a culture that could never again be the basis for their society.[8] The by-product of this fight was the creation of Southern conservatism and the belief in the Old South. The war had not altered the idea of Southern distinctiveness in the hearts of Southerners.[9] We are left, then, at a point in our history that polarized the nation.

John Brown Gordon was committed to the mission of national reconciliation. He knew that the South would have to embrace the North to repair the devastation of the war. Driven by dedication to public service after the war, he worked through his positions in governmental offices to help the South.[10] As his public life slowed he began work on a lecture aimed at making him a peacemaker, a missionary for reconciliation.[11] His purpose was to provide a broad, nationalistic perspective which

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5 Eckert, 317.
6 Eckert, 321.
7 William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National Character (New York: George Braziller, 1961) 21.
8 Taylor, 336.
9 Taylor, 18.
10 Eckert, 324.
11 Eckert, 321.

created a common vantage point that would allow both Northerners and Southerners to derive pride and honor from their participation in the Civil War. The lecture, "The Last Days of the Confederacy," became very popular in a short period of time, and made Gordon one of the most requested speakers of the Southern Lyceum Program and Slayton Lyceum Program.[12]

The fundamental question is not whether Gordon was effective or not in delivering his message; the literature review will demonstrate the audiences' eager reception of the message. The question is, more importantly, what rhetorical strategies did he use to sway his audiences to a reconciliatory mood? The purpose of this study is to provide a critical interpretation of the speech that will attempt to account for the effectiveness of the rhetorical elements within the work.

Literature Review

Two conclusions emerge from a review of literature regarding the lecture. The first, developed from accounts by journalists, historians, and biographers, demonstrates the power of the speech over audiences. The second theme looks to the current rhetorical analysis conducted on the lecture, focusing on the inadequacies in the interpretations of the rhetorical strategies of the lecture.

Gordon's public life centered around the senatorial and gubernatorial offices he held in Georgia. His commitment to Georgia, one may postulate, shaded the speech with political ends. While lecturing in Decatur, Illinois, Gordon addressed the accusation: "I am simply out of politics and will not talk on the subject. All the ropes you have in Decatur would not draw me out, and you must certainly understand that it would be bad form for me to talk politics when I say that my lectures are delivered to persons of all political beliefs."[13] Previously, when pressed on the same question, he

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12 Eckert, 317.

13 Herald Dispatch (Decatur, IL) 31 Mar. 1897: 5. Cited in Howard Dorgan, "A Case Study In Reconciliation: General John B. Gordon and 'The Last Day of the Confederacy,'" Quarterly Journal of Speech 60 (1974) 83.

stated, "[M]y message is one of love, brotherly love, and I have made it a rule on this tour to refrain from speaking on politics or any subject that will cause a discussion."[14]

In fact, Gordon was very dedicated to a reconciliatory tone in the lecture. The Daily Capital exclaimed, "No man can hear General Gordon and fail to be a better and purer man. His words are as dew drops from on high, purifying the soul and enlightening the mind to all that is good on earth."[15] So moving was the speech that the "veterans of both blue and gray struggled to grasp him by the hand and to thank him."[16] It became quite clear that he was on "a mission. . . of peace," perhaps best exemplified by an incident in Vermont:[17]

> When I was introduced to the great audience they seemed as cold as an iceberg. . . But I determined to beard the lion in his den. . . . I said. "Ladies and Gentlemen, here is a live and kicking rebel general who fought you from first to last with all of the spirit and enthusiasm of his soul." I got their attention and delivered my lecture. . . . When I was through they ran up to me and grasped my hands, some with tears trickling down their cheeks, and thanked me for the lecture. . . . The last man. . . extended his hand and said: "General Gordon, I have hated you for more than thirty years; I have hated everything South. . . . You killed the noblest boy of my home, and he lies buried now in an unknown grave. We have mourned his loss all these years. When I listened to you and heard you tell the history of your hardships, how the soldier marched barefooted, how he lived without a bite some days, how he suffered, I can see that he was fighting for the cause which he esteemed more dear than life. But here is my hand. I will never hate you any more. . . . My hatred for the South is all gone forever.[18]

The content of the speech was charged with great emotion, "filled with the spirit of reunion."[19] Gordon created the story around the "heroic bravery of Union soldiers, the undaunted courage of the Southern men, the self-sacrifice of noble Southern womanhood, the patriotism of Northern womanhood, interspersed with lively anecdotes and abundant incidents illustrating the grim humor of the camp and

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14 Minneapolis Journal 29 Mar. 1895: 5. Cited in Dorgan, 86.

15 Daily Capital (Sedalia, MO) 26 Mar. 1897: 2. Cited in Dorgan, 83.

16 St. Louis Republic. Quoted in Southern Lyceum Bureau program for Gordon lecture, 1897-1898 season. Cited in Eckert, 317.

17 New York Times 26 Nov. 1893: 5.

18 Atlanta Journal 9 Jan. 1904: 9. Cited in Dorgan, 83; Eckert, 320.

19 New York Times 10 Jan. 1904: 7.

the deep pathos and the suffering in the field and in the home." Gordon "talked entertainingly, graphically, even eloquently, of the war between the North and the South. He told his story well, and there was about it the charm," that for over two hours "enchained the attention of every individual in earshot."[20] The Minneapolis Tribune described "The Last Days of the Confederacy" as "one of the most patriotic [speeches] delivered in the city."[21] "Vast audiences everywhere. . . [were] alternately moved to tears and laughter and enthusiasm" in his descriptions of "the valor, heroism and the great privations undergone [which] brought out the greatness of the American people such as no other country or people had ever seen."[22] "As he described scene after scene his audience wept with him, listening breathlessly lest they should lose a word" of this speech with "its burning words of patriotism."[23]

The reports of Gordon's ability to deliver the lecture's words of patriotism and reconciliation were no less astounding. Gordon's eloquence was entrancing, "his patriotism burning; he makes the loyal blood leap and burn in the veins" making him "one of the most eloquent and persuasive advocates of reconciliation between the sections."[24] The Commonwealth Reporter of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin, noted that "the general is an orator of uncommon power. He has the ability to tell an incident with striking force, and his climaxes are given with such vigor and eloquence as to rouse the full enthusiasm of his hearers. His pathos at times took firm hold of the deep emotions of the audience."[25] Gordon was able to play upon the patriarchal image of the Old South cavalier to strengthen the appeal of the lecture and ingratiary nature of

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[20] St. Louis Republic. Quoted in Southern Lyceum Bureau program for Gordon lecture, 1897-1898 season. Cited in Eckert, 317; Kansas City Star 6 Apr. 1895: 2. Cited in Dorgan, 83; Houston Daily Post 24 Oct. 1894: 6. Cited in Dorgan, 85.

[21] Minneapolis Tribune 30 Mar. 1895: 12. Cited in Dorgan, 83.

[22] Daily News (Danville, IL) 22 Mar. 1895: 4. Cited in Dorgan, 86; Arkansas City Daily Traveler 23 March 1897: 3. Cited in Dorgan, 83.

[23] Nashville Banner 25 June 1897: 5. Cited in Dorgan, 85; Daily News (Danville, IL) 22 Mar. 1895: 4. Cited in Dorgan, 86.

[24] Daily News (Danville, IL) 20 Mar. 1895: 2. Cited in Dorgan, 83; "Soldiers and Gentlemen," The Outlook 76 January (1904): 152. Cited in Dorgan, 83.

[25] Commonwealth Reporter (Fond du Lac, WI) 28 Mar. 1895: 2. Cited in Dorgan, 84.

the oratory. He demonstrated "all the natural dash and brilliancy of the Southerner," often described as "handsome and brave and dashing" and "a man of honor. . . a chivalrous gentleman in the sense of the term," who possessed the "Old Confederate look."[26] The sheer popularity of "The Last Days of the Confederacy" and Gordon is best summed up by the Minneapolis Sunday Times: "There was something so much deeper in the man than even in what he uttered that his very presence lent a solemn and sacred grandeur to the occasion."[27] For all these reasons "The Last Days of the Confederacy" was made "one of the greatest attractions on the lecture list of the country."[28]

Gordon was also considered capable of working great magic in his telling of "The Last Days of the Confederacy," and that any endorsement by Gordon during the lecture would cast great favor upon that person.[29] This is exemplified in this short anecdote: In 1894, when the tide of Populism was rising fearfully, Senator Matt W. Ransom's political fortunes were foundering in North Carolina. The mayor of Charlotte wrote him that "The country people, as it seems to us, are at present against you." Then he proposed a well-tested stratagem: "getting Genl Gordon to deliver his lecture on the 'the last days of the Confederacy,' inviting the country people, and getting him to make an allusion to you!"[30]

The reports of journalists demonstrate the vivid narrative used by Gordon in creating the lecture. Historians have been no less kind to Gordon, in affirming his oratorical ability. Waldo Braden, in his discussion of oratory in the South, noted

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[26] New York Times 25 Nov. 1893: 5; Atlanta Constitution 8 Jan. 1904: 1. Cited in Dorgan, 84; "Soldiers and Gentlemen," The Outlook 76 January (1904): 132. Cited in Dorgan, 83; Kansas City Star 5 Apr. 1895: 5. Cited in Dorgan, 84.

[27] Minneapolis Sunday Times. Quoted in the Southern Lyceum Bureau program. Cited in Dorgan, 84.

[28] Atlanta Journal 10 Jan. 1904: 3. Cited in Dorgan, 83.

[29] Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 65.

[30] R. J. Brevard to M. W. Ransom, July 3, 1894, in M. W. Ransom Papers (University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill). In Woodward, Origins of the New South, 158; also in Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983) 65.

Gordon as a prominent historical figure: "An artist at weaving references to the past into his speaking [Gordon] found enthusiastic welcomes wherever he chose to speak."[31] Gordon created a reconciliatory tone; "he was masterful at establishing common ground and gaining sympathy for the South."[32] He also worked to "strengthen the sentiment of national fraternity," which pulled together a "series of touching stories. . . [that] emphasized how a noble spirit prevailed even during fierce fighting."[33] Braden urged the reader to make a "careful reading of the recitation," since the "Confederate pictured was indeed the romantic figure of the feudal South" which endowed Gordon's characters with knightly qualities such as "courage, compassion, valor, patriotism, respect for women, deep religious feeling, and generosity."[34] Even though Braden urges a "careful reading of the recitation," his consideration of "The Last Days of the Confederacy" lacks in analysis and criticism, further supporting the identification of a gap in literature surrounding Gordon's lecture.

In John Brown Gordon: Soldier, Southerner, American, the most extensive biography of Gordon to date, Ralph Eckert describes Gordon's work as a reconciliatory orator in brief, noting the major events in the creation and execution of "The Lasts Days of the Confederacy." Eckert contends that Gordon's purpose was "nationalistic, to present the war and wartime experiences in a manner removing the heated passions and transforming the struggle into a trial by fire wherein the American character had been tempered and strengthened. Thus the war and participation in it could be glorified."[35] His effort to eliminate the "barriers of hate and sectional animosity frequently brought about touching scenes," none of which is

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31 Waldo W.Braden, Oratory in the New South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979) 15.
32 Braden, 15.
33 Braden, 15.
34 Braden, 16.
35 Eckert, 320.

more dramatic, perhaps, than the story of Vermont previously cited.[36] The effort to draw people of the North and South together through the lecture met with considerable success, affording him the image of peacemaker, which he nurtured carefully by refusing political discussion. Gordon constructed an effective conciliatory strategy, "Carefully treading along the narrow path of common ground that he had helped to establish, [he] contributed significantly to cementing national bonds between the former warring sections."[37] As demonstrated by Eckert's listing of contemporary journalistic comments, "reviews of Gordon's lectures seldom varied, except perhaps in reporters' efforts to outdo one another in their praise of the general."[38] Eckert, however, has focused only on audience reaction. The power of the speech, as described by Eckert's survey of the literature on the lecture, acts as compelling evidence for more than summary. A speech as powerful as this, then, requires critical interpretation from a rhetorical context.

While the history of the lecture series is replete with journalistic reports of Gordon's magnetic eloquence and smooth, Southern delivery, only one article has ever addressed the lecture as a rhetorical work. In "A Case Study in Reconciliation: General John B. Gordon and 'The Last Days of the Confederacy'" Howard Dorgan states that "it might be suggested that the nation's exposure to 'The Last Days of the Confederacy' was one of the multitudinous factors contributing to that nationalistic spirit of the age."[39] He poses the question: Why was Gordon so popular as a lecturer? The answer, Dorgan contends, seems to lie in three factors: "first, the platform image of the general; second, his natural eloquence; and third, and most important, the warmly reconciliatory tone of the speech."[40] According to Dorgan,

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36 Eckert, 320.
37 Eckert, 321.
38 Eckert, 319.
39 Howard Dorgan, "A Case Study In Reconciliation: General John B. Gordon and 'The Last Day of the Confederacy,'" Quarterly Journal of Speech 60.1 (1974): 91.
40 Dorgan, 84.

Gordon "poured into the lecture a heavy mixture of heroics, patriotism, and reconciliation" and "told his audiences it mattered not with which side their sympathies had lain."[41] The words of reconciliation that Gordon had used invariably engendered reciprocal sentiments from both the North and South, allowing Gordon to strengthen his image as a peacemaker so that his speech could have a universal appeal.[42] As an orator, Gordon packed the speech with reassertions of his spirit for reunion by identifying the Republic, Flag, and America. He pointed to other examples of "wartime intersectional affability, first through his heroine of the Susquehanna narrative, then through his General Barlow story, next through his account of the Federal protection of Mrs. Gordon, and finally through his description of those closing scenes at Appomattox."[43]

The implication, Dorgan argues, of the lecture is that:

> "every element of Gordon's lecture was designed to make audiences feel good about themselves, about their respective section, and about the nation as a whole. . . [where] every man was right; no man was wrong. There was no pain, anguish, sectional bitterness, or senseless destruction. There was only bravery, chivalrousness, comradeship, devotion to duty, and that strange amalgam of rationales which ultimately pronounced each side as patriotic in fighting the other."[44]

Yet, though Dorgan is the sole rhetorical critic of the lecture, he offers few conclusions about it. Dorgan argues that Gordon's platform image was developed from "gallantry, chivalrousness, charm, and eloquent dignity," creating a powerful ethos.[45] His conclusion is further supported by the reporting of his oratorical power in conjunction with the reconciliatory tone. Based on these premises Dorgan concludes that the popularity of the lecture was based on the speech's reconciliatory, patriotic tone due to its universal praise and time of rising nationalism in the 1890's. However, the analysis fails to demonstrate how the material in the speech--invention,

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41 Dorgan, 85.
42 Dorgan, 86.
43 Dorgan, 87.
44 Dorgan, 90.
45 Dorgan, 84.

structure, and style of narratives--contribute to that power. Dorgan seems to penetrate no further than stating the themes of the speech. I feel that an in depth analysis of the narrative, with particular attention to the synecdochal qualities of the characters, settings, actions, and themes may bring forth the critical interpretation vital to understanding the effectiveness of the rhetorical elements employed by Gordon in the lecture.

Methodology

The purpose of this critical interpretation of Gordon's lecture is to account for the effectiveness of the rhetorical elements and strategies in the work. The analysis will be based on Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm. Narratives dominate the content and structure of speech; narratives provide a way of ordering and presenting a view of the world through descriptions of a situation--the act of storytelling--the format Gordon chose in creating the lecture. After drawing conclusions from application of the narrative paradigm I will focus on identifying and evaluating Gordon's rhetorical vision, which is based in Ernest Bormann's fantasy-theme theory. Finally, due to the synecdochal nature of the narratives I will use Kenneth Burke's four master tropes literature to fully interpret the various aspects of the narrative, which complements the initial mission of narrative criticism.

Fisher puts forth several root metaphors for human beings; Fisher proposes that *Homo narrans* be added to the list.[46] When narration is the master metaphor, other metaphors present "become conceptions that inform various ways of recounting or accounting for human choice and action."[47] "Recounting," the aspect of the narrative paradigm that I am concerned with, takes forms such as history and biography. When people recount they endeavor to create stories to establish a

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46 Walter Fisher, Human Communication as Narration: Toward a Philosophy of Reason, Value, and Action (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1987) 62; Fisher includes Homo faber, Homo economicus, Homo politicus, Homo sociologicus, Homo sapiens.

47 Fisher, 62.

meaningful world. "The character of narrator(s), the conflicts, the resolutions, and the styles" may vary, writes Fisher, but recounting is the way of relating truth about the human condition. Fisher contends, with Burke as a basis, that the *Homo narrans* metaphor is an incorporation and extension of the definition of man as a symbol using creature: "Symbols are created and communicated ultimately as stories meant to give order to human experience and to induce others to dwell in them in order to establish ways of living in common, in intellectual and spiritual communities in which there is confrontation for the story that constitutes one's life."[48] The materials for the narrative drama are provided by life experiences. Fisher notes also the relationship of the narrative paradigm to Bormann's concept of rhetorical vision. The drama, or fantasy, Bormann holds, is composed of the "creative and imaginative interpretation of events that fulfills a psychological or rhetorical need."[49] The existence of rhetorical visions, then, demonstrates the validity of the narrative paradigm critique.

The presuppositions that underpin Fisher's narrative paradigm are the following:

> (1) Humans are essentially storytellers. (2) The paradigmatic mode of human decision making and communication is "good reasons," which vary in form among situations, genres, and media of communication. (3) The production and practice of good reasons are ruled by matters of history, biography, culture, and character. . . . (4) Rationality is determined by the nature of persons as narrative beings--their inherent awareness of narrative probability, what constitutes a coherent story, and their constant habit of testing narrative fidelity, whether or not the stories they experience ring true with the stories they know to be true in their values. (5) The world as we know it is a set of stories that must be chosen among in order for us to live life in a process of continual re-creation.[50]

The philosophical ground of the narrative paradigm is ontology. The materials of the narrative paradigm are symbols, signs of consubstantiation, and good reasons, the communicative expressions of social reality.[51] Finally, according to Fisher,

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48 Fisher, 63.
49 Fisher, 63.
50 Fisher, 65.
51 Fisher, 65.

narratives enable us to "understand the actions of others because we all live out narratives in our lives and because we understand our own lives in terms of narratives."[52]

In conducting a narrative critique, the critic must evaluate the narrative's rationality. Narrative rationality is descriptive, for "it offers an account, an understanding, of any instance of human choice and action, including science."[53] The operative principle of narrative rationality is identification rather than deliberation. In other words, "narration implies that stories that are told for and about them and that they have a rational capacity to make such judgments. To apply a narrative paradigm to communication is to hold, along with Aristotle, that people have a natural tendency to prefer what they perceive as the true and the just."[54] Most important, perhaps, is the usefulness of the narrative paradigm outlined by Fisher, for he argues that one of the functions of the narrative criticism is that "the paradigm is a ground for resolving the dualisms" of the narrative, an intrinsic element in the lecture.[55]

Sonja Foss, in reconstructing the narrative paradigm into a viable analytical framework, refines narrative criticism into a process that I will use in the critical interpretation of the speech. The procedure for this method involves three major steps: "(1) analysis of the substance of the narrative; (2) analysis of the form of the narrative; and (3) evaluation of the narrative."[56] Under each step, Foss offers several potential analytical parameters. For my critique of Gordon the analytic framework will focus on four parameters: setting, events, characters, and themes. The first parameter, setting, asks questions in terms of two phases. The first phase, substance, asks what is the setting depicted in the narrative. It is a description of the place in which the characters think and act. In the second phase form, the question to be asked

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52 Fisher, 66.
53 Fisher, 66.
54 Fisher, 67.
55 Fisher, 68.
56 Foss, 230.

is how the particular setting is created. Events, the second parameter, compels the question of what are the major and minor events in the narrative. Major events suggest critical points around which the narrative is constructed. Without a major events any coherency in a narrative is not possible. Juxtaposed to the major event are satellites, which are minor plot elements, or grounds, for the major event to operate on. In the narrative the satellites do not have to appear in immediate proximity of the major event. In the phase of form, the analysis focuses on how the major event and satellites are presented. The third parameter, characters, inquires into the people, figures, or creatures who think and communicate, or create the substance, in the narrative. In identifying the characters during the substance phase, the analysis focuses on the physical and mental traits of the character, as well as how those traits change over the course of the narrative. In presentation of form, the characters may be considered flat or round. Flat characters are those with few dominating traits and tend to be predictable. Round characters, on the other hand, possess a variety of traits, which makes them unpredictable. Finally, theme, the integral backbone to the narrative, gives meaning, or value, to the substance of the narrative. In identifying the form of the theme the analysis focuses on how the theme is presented; is it articulated by the characters or is it presented by the narrator? Is the theme overt or covert in the text of the narrative?

The parameters of the analytical framework represent ends of the criticism. However, it is important to create for the critic a set of analytical criteria, or tools, with which to critique the narrative. It is the implementation of these tools that allow for the final major step of the critical method--evaluation of narrative. For this, three criteria were chosen: significance, coherence, and fidelity. First, does the narrative have a significant point? As Foss states: "The movement in the narrative should serve a point of have a clear orientation, [and] that point should be seen as worthwhile

and relevant to the audience."[57] This aspect will aid in the evaluation of the rhetorical vision. Second, coherency is concerned with the narrative's integrity as a whole, whether it has adequate connections within it. Coherency looks for continuance of a subject, and, if the subject is changed, a description of the basis for that change. Third, fidelity is concerned with "the quality of the narrative, whether the narrative represents accurate assertions about reality or corresponds with fact or given quality, condition, or event."[58] Coherency and fidelity are important principles in the overall evaluation of narrative rationality.

As stated previously, the existence of a rhetorical vision demonstrates the validity of the narrative paradigm. Rhetorical vision is a term created by Ernest Bormann in his work on fantasy theme analysis. Bormann argues that speaker-audience transactions create a chaining effect, carrying the message from one person to another as each person interacts with others.[59] While this method is used to trace the vision through several layers of discourse, I am interested in a specific application. The rhetorical vision of the rhetor, in creating the narrative, is displayed in the symbols inherent in the narrative. By specifically focusing on the construction of setting, character, action (events), and themes of the narrative the rhetorical vision and motive of the rhetor can be revealed. In other words, the rhetor can create elements in the narrative that will be predisposed to swaying the audience. The purpose of revealing the rhetorical vision in the lecture is to allow me to evaluate my conclusions, based on the rhetorical vision, against the recorded intentions of the lecture, or, be able to answer the question of to what degree the lecture really was reconciliatory. In identifying and evaluating the rhetorical vision I will follow the following process: (1) finding evidence of a rhetorical vision; (2) coding the lecture

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57 Foss, 237.
58 Foss, 238.
59 Ernest Bormann, "Fantasy and Rhetorical Vision: The Rhetorical Criticism of Social Reality," Quarterly Journal of Speech 58.4 (1972): 58.

for setting, character, action (event), and theme; (3) construction of a rhetorical vision; and (4) identification of motive.[60]

Burke, in A Grammar of Motives, presents the four master tropes: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony. The nature of the lecture is a compilation of anecdotes. The stories provide new perspectives, reduce ideas, use symbolic representations, and place narrative elements in a dialectic juxtaposition. Metaphor is a device for realizing something in terms of another. To "consider A from the point of view of B is, of course, to use B as a perspective upon A."[61] In approaching a rhetorical work through as many different perspectives as possible (in reference to our present understanding) the critic can establish a sense of reality, eliminating doubt. From the mass of perspectives it becomes necessary to reduce the "more complex realm of being to the terms of a lower or less complex realm of being."[62] Thus, this creation of metonymy is a strategy to convey intangible state in terms of the tangible. From the reduction of perspectives we form representations--part for the whole or whole for the part. These conversions, based on an integral relationship of convertibility, define synecdoche. Anecdotes are a treatment of synecdoche, representing some higher meaning or warrant. When juxtaposed, these representative anecdotes form a dialectic pair, known as the last trope--irony. "Irony arises when one tries, by the interaction of terms upon one another, to produce a development..."[63] The dialectic of this participation produces a "resultant certainty of a different quality, necessarily ironic, since it requires that all the sub-certainties be considered as neither true nor false, but contributory."[64] Metaphorically, the Tao can only exist from the dialectic relationship of Yin and Yang.

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60 Foss, 293.
61 Kenneth Burke, A Grammar of Motives and a Rhetoric of Motives (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1962) 504.
62 Burke, 506
63 Burke, 512.
64 Burke, 513.

The purpose of this critical interpretation of Gordon's speech is to account for the effectiveness of the rhetorical elements and strategies in the work. Using Fisher's narrative paradigm I will evaluate the narratives that dominate the content and structure of speech, the format Gordon chose in creating the lecture. After drawing conclusions from application of the narrative paradigm I will focus on identifying and evaluating Gordon's rhetorical vision to evaluate the consistency of the speech's motives and Gordon's professed motives. Finally, due to the synecdochal nature of the narratives I will use Burke's four master tropes literature to fully interpret the various aspects of the narrative, which compliments the initial mission of narrative criticism.

Conclusion

In his drive for reconciliation and the re-establishment of national fraternity John Brown Gordon created "The Last Days of the Confederacy" to tame the hearts touched with the fire of the Civil War. The eloquence of his lecture and personal vivacity would thrust Gordon to the position of a prominent architect of the New South. His lecturing would last over a decade, winning praise in both the North and South, making him a needed peacemaker, salving the lingering wounds of sectionalism. The question is, then, what rhetorical strategies, powerful as they were, did he use to sway his audiences to a reconciliatory mood? A critical interpretation of the rhetorical elements and strategies of Gordon's lecture using the narrative paradigm can answer just such a question.

CHAPTER TWO

Background

> For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it's still not yet two o'clock on the July afternoon in 1863, the brigades are in position behind the rail fence, the guns are laid and ready in the woods and the furled flags are already loosened to break out. . . and it's all in the balance, it hasn't happened yet. . . we all know that, we have come too far with too much at stake and that moment doesn't need even a fourteen year-old boy to think *This time. Maybe this time...*
>
> William Faulkner,
> *Intruder in the Dust*

In 1865 Albion W. Tourgee predicted that, within thirty years, "popular sympathy will be with those who upheld the Confederate cause. . . our popular heroes will be Confederate leaders; our fiction will be Southern in its prevailing types and distinctively Southern in its character."[1]

The Use of Myths in a Rhetorical Context

John Brown Gordon, commander-in-chief of the United Confederate Veterans from 1890-1904, became the "very personification of the Southern gentleman and the Confederate hero."[2] Braden argues that, like many Southern politicians, Gordon became well-practiced in the exploitation of Southern mythology.[3] Myth has become a "means of dramatizing deep-seated group yearnings and values."[4] Joseph Campbell, an authority on mythology, suggests:

> No human society has yet been found in which such mythological motifs have not been rehearsed in liturgies; interpreted by seers, poets,

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1 Albion W. Tourgee, "The South as a Field for Fiction," The Forum, VI (December 1888), 404-7. In Paul M. Gaston, The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970) 171.

2 Waldo Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983) 65.

3 Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 65.

4 Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 67.

> theologians, or philosophers; presented in art; magnified in song; and ecstatically experienced in life-empowering visions.[5]

Walter Lippman states, "What a myth never contains is the critical power to separate its truth from its error."[6] Henry Nash Smith describes a myth as "an intellectual construction that fuses concept and emotion into an image."[7] Therefore, to fully understand the potency of Gordon's conciliatory message, one must understand the myths Gordon used to "amplify his arguments and relate it to the listeners' needs and wants."[8]

This chapter will identify the origins and creation of myth for the Southern mythology: Southern distinctiveness and heritage; divine Providence; the Lost Cause; and the Southern hero.

The Creation of Southern Mythology

With the crumbling of so many of its old defenses, "the South has tended to substitute myths about the past."[9] C. Vann Woodward, a prominent scholar on the South, argues that "every self-conscious group of any size fabricates myths about its past: about its origins, its mission, its righteousness, its benevolence, its general superiority."[10] Woodward points out that few groups in the New World have had their myths subjected to such destructive analysis as those of the South underwent. While some Southern historians have contributed to the mythmaking, "others have been among the leading iconoclasts, and their attacks have spared few of the South's cherished myths."[11]

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5 Joseph Campbell, "The Historical Development of Mythology," in Myth and Mythmaking, ed. Henry A. Murray (Boston, 1960) 19; cited in Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 67.

6 Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion, (New York, 1932) 132; cited in Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 67.

7 Henry Nash Smith, Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth, (Cambridge, 1950) vii; cited in Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 68.

8 Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 79.

9 C. Vann Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1968) 12.

10 Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, 12.

11 Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, 12.

These judgments have created a great deal of conflicting ambitions and experiences for Southerners. Paul Gaston notes that, to harmonize these conflicting ambitions and experiences, "Southerners have nurtured their myths to perform something closely akin to the function of religion--to unify experience."[12] Gaston also points out that myths are not polite euphemisms for falsehoods, but "are combinations of images and symbols that reflect a people's way of perceiving truth."[13] Thus, the unifying experience can work to create a culturally based truth, such as the myth of the Lost Cause and Old South. These myths were then employed as tools against change and acculturation of the South to national values and experiences.

Important though the myths were as a bulwark against change, "a conscious manipulation cannot fully account for [their] vitality and effectiveness."[14] Gaston, whose work is centered on Southern mythmaking, argues that:

> Myths are something more than advertising slogans and propaganda ploys rationally connected to a specific purpose. They have a subtle way of permeating the thought and conditioning the actions even of those who may be rationally opposed to their consequences. They arise out of complex circumstances to create mental sets which do not ordinarily yield to intellectual attacks. The history of their dynamics suggests that they may be penetrated by rational analysis only as the consequence of dramatic, or even traumatic, alterations in the society whose essence they exist to portray.

Thus, the critique and dissipation of myths becomes possible, Gaston contends, only when "tension between the mythic view and the reality it sustains snaps the viability of their relationship, creates new social patterns and with them new harmonizing myths."[15]

Woodward argues that, while the myths of Southern distinctiveness have been waning, national myths have been waxing in power and appeal; "national myths,

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12 Paul M. Gaston, The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1970) 8.
13 Gaston, 9.
14 Gaston, 223.
15 Gaston, 223.

American myths have proved far more sacrosanct and inviolate than Southern myths."[16] With the waning of Southern myths the South accepts, potentially, the threat of becoming indistinguishable, of being "submerged under a national steamroller, [a thought which] has haunted the mind of the South for a long time."[17] Woodward notes, however, that the "danger in the wholesale rejection of the South by the modern Southerner bent on reaffirming his Americanism is the danger of affirming more than he bargains for."[18]

Still, while Southern myths had waned in power, the "Old South" had held a romantic flavor that attracted a great deal of attention from the North. Gunnar Myrdal had observed, even though "the North has so few vestiges of feudalism and aristocracy of its own that, even though it dislikes them fundamentally and is happy not to have them, Yankees are thrilled by them."[19] Myrdal argued that "Northerners apparently cherish the idea of having had an aristocracy and of still having a real class society--in the South. So it manufactured the myth of the 'Old South' or had it manufactured by Southern writers working for the Northern market."[20]

Waldo Braden has described another aspect of Southern mythology. It is that of a "totally unified, wholly dedicated, long-suffering, and courageous Confederate people."[21] Bradley T. Johnson, a Confederate veteran and speaker, fills this lively description of the Southern people:

> It is this constant and growing consciousness of the nobleness and justice and chivalry of the Confederate cause which constitutes the success and illuminates the triumph we commemorate today. Evil dies, good lives; and the time will come when all the world will realize that the failure of the Confederacy was a great misfortune to humanity and will by the source of unnumbered woes to liberty. . . . This great

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16 Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, 13.

17 Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, 8.

18 Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, 13.

19 Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro and Modern Democracy, 2 vols. (New York, 1944), II, 1375. In Gaston, 179.

20 Myrdal, 1375. In Gaston, 179.

21 Waldo W. Braden, Oratory in the New South, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1979) 163.

> and noble cause, the principles of which I have attempted to formulate for you, was defended with a genius and a chivalry of men and women never equaled by any race.[22]

Edward Walthall, another Confederate veteran and speaker, delivered this account of Southern people while speaking in Mississippi:

> There is some priceless element in Southern character that I cannot define, which makes our people at once practical and sentimental--makes them good soldiers and good citizens, sustains them in every trial, adapts them to every changed condition and anchors them upon their honor as a rock; something that makes the men knightly in their deference for women, and makes the gentle woman strong when trouble comes. I know not what it is, but. . . it is real, it is Southern, and it is worth preserving.[23]

The concept of Southern distinctiveness was, for their speakers, viable and defensible. However, there is one aspect of Southern culture that dominates like no other myth in the national schema: the South suffered the only defeat in war in all of American history.

Defeated and discredited, they were confronted by efforts on the part of bigots in the North to "paint the Lost Cause in darkest colors, to sully it with crimes more horrible than matricide, to overwhelm its supporters with the odium and infamy of traitors."[24] Paul Buck describes the creation and use of the "Old South" as a tool against such bigots. Buck argues that, to the South, the myth of the Old South gave a "vitally necessary sense of greatness to assuage the bitter wounds of defeat; to the North it offered a way in which to apologize without sacrificing the fruits of victory."[25] Buck continues:

> The complex strands that wove together the myth of the Old South--alienation of the Southerner from national values and ideals in the antebellum period; alienation of a few Northerners, both before and after the war, from the strident pace of material progress; innocent love for another, grandeur civilization of the part of most--did not obscure for the New South spokesmen the incalculably valuable service it

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22 Bradley T. Johnson, "Placing Principle Above Policy." In Braden, 18.

23 Edward Walthall, "The Confederate Dead of Mississippi." In Braden, 164.

24 Minutes of the United Confederate Veterans, Sixth Reunion. In Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion: 1865-1900, (New York: Vintage Books, 1959) 252.

25 Gaston, 179.

> could perform in the cause of sectional reconciliation, a basic tenet of the New South creed. If the myth in antebellum days had bespoken alienation on the part of Southerners from national ways, in the postbellum period it worked in precisely the opposite direction, uniting the two sections.[26]

The myths did in fact aid in the reconciliation and were widely utilized by the New South spokesmen. However, a problem remained. The problem for the Southern veteran was one of adjustment. Buck notes that it is he who retained "the memory of a manly fight for principle, [for] he revered the martyrhood of comrades slain in battle and recognized the duty devolving on himself to protect them from aspersion."[27] The Confederate veteran experienced a "warm glow of affection for the banner furled forever in defeat and for associations it recalled [and] could not repudiate and assume a false humility towards a past he gloried in."[28] Rather the Confederate veteran resented bitterly the "epithets of rebellion and treason when applied to his conduct [and] demanded a 'true' history of how men could honestly espouse a cause too often execrated by the misunderstanding world outside."[29]

Woodward states that "success and victory are still national habits of mind."[30] He argues that this is "but one among several American legends in which the South can participate only vicariously or in part."[31] As previously stated, the South's loss in the Civil War loss represents the only loss by Americans in any war prior to Vietnam. Woodward notes this experience for the Southern heritage:

> Again the Southern heritage is distinctive. For Southern history, unlike American, includes large components of frustration, failure, and defeat. It includes not only an overwhelming military defeat but long decades of defeat in the provinces of economic, social, and political life. Such a heritage affords the Southern people no basis for the delusion that there is nothing whatever that is beyond their power to accomplish. They have had it forcibly and repeatedly borne in upon them that this is not the case. Since their experience in this respect is

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26 Gaston, 179.

27 Paul H. Buck, The Road to Reunion: 1865-1900, (New York: Vintage Books, 1959) 250.

28 Buck, 250.

29 Buck, 250.

30 Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, 19.

31 Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, 19.

> more common among the general run of mankind than that of their fellow Americans, it would seem to be a part of their heritage worth cherishing.[32]

A Myth's Religious Appeal

Religion, as much as heritage, creates a common base for historical mythology to be created. The South, in creating its own mythology, looked to its belief in divine Providence as yet another source to create myth for the needs and wants of Southerners.

In 1895 the United Daughters of the Confederacy was organized in the capital of the New South, Atlanta. Only then, "when the movement was taken into custody by Southern Womanhood, did the cult of the Lost Cause assume a religious character."[33] The religious character that the Lost Cause assumed allowed the South to explain the loss in terms of divine Providence. Braden explains:

> Southern people. . . had always placed great faith in the ever-present hand of Providence; therefore, this defeat needed to be explained in terms of a worthy goal which Providence could bless. That goal, as might be guessed, was a return to constitutionally guaranteed freedoms and a general reacceptance of governmental principles defended by the American Founding Fathers and by the Confederates. If it could be shown that the nation was making such a return and that such was due in part to the Confederate struggle, the Lost Cause had not been lost at all.[34]

In his discussion of Southern oratory, Braden points out the utilization of Providence by the ceremonial, mythic speakers and spokesmen of the New South.

> There is also evidence that speakers saw this sacrifice as an act of divine will. . . . The Confederate cause had not been defeated because it was unjust, declared Lee, nor because its leaders lacked skill and its soldiers lacked bravery, 'but because he who rules above deemed it best it should fail.'[35] In saying this Lee drew a distinction between justice and God's will, thereby suggesting that the deity might have thwarted immediate justice in order to achieve a greater good. The greater good, he then implied, was an eventual dominance of

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32 Woodward, The Burden of Southern History, 19.

33 C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951) 156.

34 Braden, 169.

35 Richard Henry Lee, "The Causes of the War." In Braden, 169.

> Confederate principles throughout the nation: 'Although the final result was not according to our desires and hopes. . . who knows but that the devotion of the South to the true principles of the Constitution may not in the future cause the fructification of those principles and their growth throughout the land.'[36] Therefore, if Confederates had won in 1865 they would have won only for themselves; in defeat they achieved a victory for the entire nation.[37]

The several specific uses to which the "mythic conception of the Old South were put to serve the needs of the New South movement help to make intelligible the paradoxical commitments of the New South prophets to the legendary romance."[38] Thus, divine Providence of the Old South had intervened against the Southern cause for some higher purpose, which did not directly avail itself at this time. Faith proved to be an important salve in the healing process in the New South.

The Lost Cause

Woodward argues that it is a "matter for speculation whether any lost cause in modern history, from that of Bonnie Prince Charlie to that of Wilhelm's legions, has received the devotion lavished upon the Stars and Bars."[39] The first step was the creation of the Lost Cause itself. In 1880, "in the earlier and more abject stage of the Great Recantation," the Louisville Courier-Journal could say blandly that "The bonny blue flag is the symbol of nothing to the present generation of Southern men. . . . The Southern Confederacy went down with it."[40] Woodward argues that this is an exaggeration, but "such a statement, even a suggestion or it, ten years later would have been well-nigh unthinkable."[41] By the same time the position on the progress of the Lost Cause was typified by the Richmond Times editor who declared simply, "It is not lost! On earth it may be lost forever. But might never did make right."[42] The

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36 Braden, 169.
37 Braden, 169.
38 Gaston, 185.
39 Woodward, Origins of the New South, 156.
40 Woodward, Origins of the New South, 155; Louisville Courier-Journal, September 7, 1880. In Woodward, Origins of the New South, 155.
41 Woodward, Origins of the New South, 155.
42 Richmond Times, May 29, 1890. In Woodward, Origins of the New South, 155.

deeper the involvements in commitments to the New South, the louder the protests of loyalty to the Old.[43]

George Clark, a Confederate veteran and postbellum judge, stated, in a speech at a reunion:

> It is sometimes said that our cause is lost. Some causes are never lost. They may be crushed in defeat, they may go down in seeming ignominy, but in the end, like truth crushed to earth, they rise again. The Confederate soldier is always and under all circumstances true to principle. There was no selfishness in his heart, no thought of the morrow with him. He put all upon his country's altar, and went forth and gave his time and his heart and his life to the cause. What did that cause represent? I said it was not lost, and I repeat the assertion. It could not be lost.[44]

He continued, with this concluding statement, to "tell me not that the cause is lost when hosts of Americans are marshalling in defense of these rights and that flag. . . of the old Confederacy [which] typifies the fight."[45]

Frank Vandiver argues that the Lost Cause represented the true acme of Southern achievement, "for it died the flower of the South, and those who yielded up their blood were such Southerners as all those who came since would like to be."[46] In reverence to the Confederate soldiers he contends that:

> (T)hey were the shining model, the marble image, the men above men who lived a brief moment as destiny's chosen. They were the South. They still are the South, for they stand above, around, and beyond what the South now is, and loom as silent prophets to lesser men in troubled times."[47]

Perhaps one of the most insightful thoughts is his conclusion: "And so they are God and curse, inspiration and death."[48]

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43 Woodward, Origins of the New South, 155.

44 George Clark, "Reunion of Texas Veterans at Waco," Confederate Veteran, II (April, 1894), 122. In Braden, 20.

45 George Clark, "Reunion of Texas Veterans at Waco," Confederate Veteran, II (April, 1894), 122. In Braden, 19.

46 Frank E. Vandiver, "The Confederate Myth," Southwest Review, 46 (Summer 1961) 199-204. In Patrick Gerster and Nicholas Cords, Eds., Myth and Southern History, (Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co., 1974) 148.

47 Vandiver, 148.

48 Vandiver, 148.

Vandiver argues that distorting the Civil War for Southerners was not easy, for they "lived larger than most, fought, raged, cowed, bled, spoke, and died with the nobility of desperation."[49] They were, like their Northern counterparts, "touched with timeless animation. . . unique and so should have been immune to the myth-makers and falsifiers of history."[50] However, Vandiver points out that the myth-makers were "determined and their work often approved by necessity [so] the Confederate changed from a human, striving, erring being something much different.[51] The result of the creation of the Lost Cause was the that all Confederates "automatically became virtuous, all were defenders of the rights of states and individuals, all were segragationists, all steadfast, all patriotic."[52] Like all lasting myths, this one had enough viability to be implemented. The Lost Cause came to be the "last American resistance against the Organization State, against racial indistinction, against mass and motor."[53]

Garvin Davenport contends that, like the earlier Cavalier mythology, this postbellum theme has been built upon a belief in the uniqueness of the Southern identity, which has distinguished it from the dominant American or national identity.[54] Furthermore, "Southerners who have explored this theme have incorporated into it a suggestion that because of this peculiar uniqueness the South has a singular and vital contribution to make to the national life."[55]

The myth of the Lost Cause and the theme of reconciliation, in the late nineteenth century, were largely accepted by the North as well as the South. Consider this response by the Grand Army of the Republic to the invitation from Louisville,

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49 Vandiver, 149.
50 Vandiver, 149.
51 Vandiver, 149.
52 Vandiver, 149.
53 Vandiver, 149.
54 F. Garvin Davenport, Jr., The Myth of Southern History, (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1970) 11; For a discussion of the Cavalier mythology see William R. Taylor, Cavalier and Yankee, (New York: George Braziller, 1961).
55 Davenport, Jr., 11.

Kentucky to hold the annual GAR encampment there: ". . . coming from representative men who stood for the Lost Cause, we see, as we never have seen before, the dawn of that day when every feeling of animosity upon the part of either section shall be lost and forever lost in the patriotic glow for one common country for which we are ready to die if necessary."[56]

Henry James, in his book, American Scene, interpreted the Lost Cause myth perhaps best:

> The collapse of the old order, the humiliation of defeat, the bereavement and bankruptcy involved, represented, with its obscure miseries and tragedies, the social revolution the most unrecorded and undepicted, in proportion to its magnitude, that ever was; so that this reversion of the starved spirit to the things of the heroic age, the four epic years, is a definite soothing salve.[57]

The Heroes

Few scenes are more inspiring than that of the hero of the Confederacy, the pathos of the Lost Cause centering in him.[58] According to Braden, the "participants in the Lost Cause were declared brave, gallant, pure, law-abiding, and God-fearing; they stood for freedom, the Constitution, and the Anglo-Saxon race."[59] Ethel Moore, in welcoming the veterans to a reunion of Tennesseans, described the Confederate hero:

> In the eyes of Southern people all Confederate veterans are heroes. It is you [the Confederate veterans] who preserve the traditions and memories of the old-time South--the sunny South, with its beautiful lands and its happy people; the South of chivalrous men and gentle women; plenty and the home of heroes. This beautiful, plentiful, happy South engendered a spirit of chivalry and gallantry for which its men were noted far and near.[60]

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56 Proceedings of the Twenty-eighth National Encampment (1894), Grand Army of the Republic. In Buck, 249.

57 Henry James, The American Scene, (New York, 1907), 371. In Gaston, 185.

58 Buck, 260.

59 Braden, 22.

60 Ethel Moore, "Reunion of Tennesseans: Address of Welcome by Miss Ethel Moore," Confederate Veteran, VI (October 1898), 482. In Gaston, 172.

Through the myth the participants the South could live in the Old South once again. However, since the myth described a unified people, those who were not soldiers demonstrated the same strength and courage at home. The themes interwoven into the myth of the Lost Cause were complex and tangled. Braden observes that the speaker naturally praised the heroism of the soldiers and the self-sacrifice of the home folks, particularly "the martyr-heroine. . . the woman--mother, sister, lover, who gave her life and heart to the cause."[61]

Actual personages from the Civil War were brought forth one more time as heros of gloried days. Jefferson Davis, hardly the most popular Confederate official, was resurrected from his plantation exile in 1886 by Henry Grady and borne in triumph up and down this old domain.[62] Standing on the spot in Montgomery where Davis had taken his oath as Confederate President twenty-five years before, Davis said, "Your demonstration now exceeds that which welcomed me then. This shows that the spirit of Southern liberty is not dead."[63]

One by one the "lofty actors of the great drama were leaving the stage and becoming memories.[64] In the construction of the Lost Cause myth, Buck notes: "Grant, Lee, Davis, Lincoln. . . we take our leaders and bend them to our wishes. The aging generation still had use of their leaders after death."[65] Before the century closed Lincoln and Lee, Davis and Grant, became idealizations, synechdochal and mythic apostles of fraternity.[66] As the myth strengthened George Clark expressed his sentiment with the contention: "The cause is triumphant and the Confederate soldier will go down into history occupying the proud page he should occupy."[67]

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61 Braden, 18.
62 Woodward, Origins of the New South, 155.
63 Richmond Dispatch, April 29, 1886. In Woodward, Origins of the New South, 155.
64 Buck, 257.
65 Buck, 257.
66 Buck, 257.
67 George Clark, "Reunion of Texas Veterans at Waco," Confederate Veteran, II (April, 1894), 123. In Braden, 20.

New South Spokesmen and the Myth

Braden, in his study of Southern oratory, states that for "disheartened Southerners, the speaker had to invent rationalizations that would turn despair into hope and would counter disparagement."[68] Gordon, as a conciliatory orator, knew the needs of the Southerner and the pretentions of the Northerners and, therefore, provided the "succor for both Yankees and Confederates and for both past and future."[69] Woodward points out that, in addition, "the South suffered from a prevailing sense of inferiority and a constant need for justifying a position," continuing that, "the really curious thing is that oftener than not this archaic romanticism, this idealizing of the past, proceeded from the mouths of the most active propagandists for the New Order."[70] The speakers did this with no apparent sense of inconsistency, certainly none of duplicity.[71] Unmindful of paradoxes, "the New South spokesmen subscribed with ardor to the mythical conception of the Old South."[72] Yet, while some orators sought political and economic ends by using mythological salve, Gordon pursued the nobler purpose of reconciling the hearts and minds of the Southerner to American, without stripping the Southerner of his distinct heritage.

The epideictic style of oration "provides an excellent vehicle for utilizing the myth."[73] The more popular and credible the speaker the more powerful the delivery of the myth and the stronger the effect on the crowd. In Gordon's crafting of his lecture he anticipated the audiences opinions and beliefs and that the audience had gathered for "emotional support and inspiration. Consequently, ideas do not need to

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68 Braden, 17.
69 Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 78.
70 Woodward, Origins of the New South, 157.
71 Woodward, Origins of the New South, 157.
72 Gaston, 173.
73 Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 76.

be proved or supported by facts and authority; they need to be magnified."[74] In other words, it became of matter of how an idea is expressed, not what is expressed. For these reasons, Braden notes that "quite possibly it is from using this mode that the Southern speaker has gained his reputation for grandiloquent style and impassioned delivery."[75]

Conclusion

The South has created a unique mythology surrounding its history, distinctive heritage, Confederate cause and those involved in the cause in an effort to justify its position. Myths do not necessarily have to be based in whole-truths, but nevertheless serve an important function in interpreting the past and giving a culture a base to derive pride from. More importantly for the South, perhaps, is the stuggle with duplicity for its American and un-American activities and its drive to reconcile with Northern neighbors while keeping the glory of a nobler, lost cause alive. Ceremonial orators had little trouble with this duplicity as they preached the New South through the myths of the Old South and Lost Cause. Gordon, while instilling pride in fellow Southerners, walked the fine line with Northern listeners as well, providing for their needs and wants of a Yankee victory. The analysis of the lecture in the next chapter demonstrates how Gordon was able to utilize myth and rhetorical strategy to reconcile and instill pride at the same time.

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74 Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 77.

75 Braden, The Oral Tradition in the South, 77.

CHAPTER THREE

Analysis and Interpretation

> As the vanguard, the color-bearers in the march of nations, we lift aloft this proud banner of freedom and bid universal humanity to catch its inspiration.
>
> John Brown Gordon

In "The Last Days of the Confederacy," Gordon masterfully uses anecdotes from his experiences in the Civil War to create narrative sequences, which construct a strategy of transformative discourse. A typical sequence would start with an ingratiary tactic in which Gordon, in his eloquent manner, would describe a Northern character, scene, or theme and juxtapose it to another story from the South. The purpose of this sequence is to generate irony, creating a dialectic between the two stories, which, at the surface, seem to be opposed. His third step, then, was to use that dialectic to point to the commonalities between the North and the South. This he would do by illustrating an American trait, skill, or value. The result would be a major theme demonstrating a national value or belief to add strength to his existing compendium of themes, such as unity, fraternity, and brotherhood--all tools to salve the process of reconciliation of conflict with face-saving for both.

The analysis supports six major sequences in which Gordon uses this strategy of transformative discourse. I will present these sequence interpretations followed by evidence from the analysis of the lecture. The evidence is offset in quotations denoting the name given to that particular anecdote.

Sequence One

The first sequence focuses on the time parameters set forth by Gordon in his speech. It covers the sections of the analysis entitled "The Southern Advance in Pennsylvania" and "Looking Forward Twenty Months." Gordon immediately works towards desensitizing the war by describing the invasion into Pennsylvania as a visit

demanded by social reciprocity, for the North had paid the South a great many visits and the Southrons could not ignore the obligation. The very language used seems to alleviate the fact that a very great many soldiers died at Gettysburg.

The description of the Confederate arrival to and departure from Pennsylvania is handled in such a way as to produce a comical response. As noted by this particular copy of the lecture, which was delivered to an audience in Brooklyn, this strategy allows Gordon to lightly handle a Federal victory over the Confederacy. The strategy did solicit laughter, a powerful tool of ingratiation. This comic relief works effectively, because Gordon has set up the crowd for a moving passage, describing the rejoining of South to the Union. The description of rejoining is powerful, using the mixing of blood to make the crimson of the flag redder and the stars brighter. This is one of many instances in which Gordon uses the Stars and Stripes as a synecdochal symbol for the United States. With the people combined in abstract terms to form a flag, Gordon demonstrates his theme of strength in unity and brotherhoood.

"The Southern Advance in Pennsylvania"

Gordon recounts the reasons for the Southern invasion of Northern soil. He cites the first reason as "hungry stomachs" which beheld the "grain-clad" valleys of Pennsylvania as an "inviting panorama."[1] More important, though, the reasoning for the crossing was that "social reciprocity demanded it."[2] He states that, "We owed our Northern cousins a large number of visits, and chivalric Southrons could not ignore such obligations."[3]

Gordon describes how the South had intended to visit earlier, "but the reception accorded us by McClellan and his men at Antietam. . . did not encourage us

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1 Gordon, 472.
2 Gordon, 472.
3 Gordon, 472.

to stay long."[4] Rather, the Confederacy decided to postpone the visit to another time, 1863, in which the Confederates would "test Pennsylvania's hospitality."[5] At this point, Gordon declares that the Southrons "desired closer communication with our Northern kinspeople in order more effectualy to persuade them to take General Scott's. . . advice and 'let the wayward Southern sisters depart in peace.'"[6] Already the description of a bloody battle begins to take on the attitude of a social call. Gordon continues desensitizing the Confederate loss at Gettysburg by explaining that "no discourtesy whatever was intended by our unceremonious departure. Our visit was cut short by circumstances over which we did not have entire control, and for which we cannot be held exclusively responsible. [Laughter.]"[7]

"Looking Forward Twenty Months"

The war was over and Gordon, in describing the defeat, left it to one line, saying "We had changed our minds and had concluded not to set up a separate government."[8] He continues his themes of strength-in-unity and fraternity:

> No more with hostile banners waving in defiance above gray-clad battle lines, but rallying now with all our countrymen around this common flag, whose crimson stripes are made redder and richer by Southern as well as Northern blood, and whose stars are brighter because they emblem the glory of both Northern and Southern achievements.[9]

Gordon has used the flag as a synecdochal symbol of the United States, describing, through metynomy of the North and South, the mixing of blood to enhance the color of the syencdochal symbol, composing a powerful visual symbol.

National fraternity is based on brotherhood. Continuing from the flag, Gordon describes a picture of North and South meeting in brotherhood under the national banner:

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4 Gordon, 472.
5 Gordon, 472.
6 Gordon, 472.
7 Gordon, 473.
8 Gordon, 473.
9 Gordon, 473.

> We returned not with rifles in our hands, demanding separation as the price of peace; but with hands outstretched to grasp those extended by the North in sincere and endless brotherhood.[10]

Brotherhood asks forgiveness for the sake of unity. Gordon declares the return "without lingering bitterness, or peurile repining," but instead focuses on the product of forgiveness, returning with "patriotism always broad and sincere, now intensified and refined in the fires of adversity."[11] Gordon continues, utilizing the nation's successful past, to propose secular unity with God's help:

> . . . to renew our vows of fidelity to that unrivaled consitutional government bequeathed by our fathers and theirs; and by God's help to make with them the joint guarantee that this Republic, and its people and the States which compose it, shall remain united co-equal, and forever free. [Applause.][12]

The underlying theme of freedom and equality demonstrates the concession of slavery and the acceptance of emancipation by the South.

Sequence Two

The second sequence uses the story of the Pennsylvania Dutchman, Heroine of Susquehanna, and Southern women. The story of the Pennsylvania Dutchman provides comical prelude to a serious matter, a strategy that Gordon uses well. The Dutchman's comment about not trading his mare for any woman allows Gordon to introduce the Heroine of Susquehanna. The Heroine, in gratitude, invites Gordon and his officers for breakfast after having saved her house from fire the night before. Inquiring as to if Gordon had found a Southern sympathizer the woman retorts in pride about her belief of the war, support for her soldier-husband and -son, and her prayers to God for the South's demise. Gordon uses this demonstration of the strong Northern woman to speak about the sacrifices made by Southern women, who, in the end, turn out to all be American women.

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10 Gordon, 473.
11 Gordon, 473.
12 Gordon, 473.

"The Pennsylvania Dutchman and His Mare"

Gordon's first anecdote of the Confederate movement into Pennsylvania centers around his detachment coming upon the "Pennsylvania Dutch, an unwarlike, magnificent people, priding themselves on their well cultivated fields, their colossal red barns, and horses nearly as big as barns."[13] Gordon continues the narrative anecdote: "Some of those horses disappeared about that time [of the invasion] from those barns, and by some strange coincidence they were found the next day securely tied in the Confederate camp."[14] Gordon plainly states that, "How they got there, whether through sympathy for the Southern cause, or were drafted into service, I never knew. . . but they were there, and evidently without their owner's consent."[15] The Dutchman, and owner, confronting Gordon, "announced to me in his broken English, that I had his mare."[16] Gordon "endeavored to explain to [the owner] that we were obliged to take some of Pennsylvania's horses to pay for those the boys in blue had been taking from us."[17] The explanation was not satisfactory to the Dutchman, and he insisted upon payment. Gordon first offered Confederate money, then a written order to be paid by Abraham Lincoln. The Dutchman liked this idea until "there in his brain crept some doubt about my authority for drawing on the President."[18] At last, when the Dutchman saw the truth, he unleashed at Gordon "a perfect volley of Dutch expletives, and ended by saying, 'I have been married three times, and I vood not geeve dot mare for all dose vomans.' [Laughter.]"[19] Gordon relented and returned the horse. Despite the humor, this story serves as a comical introduction to a more serious matter.

"Noble Daughter of the North"

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13 Gordon, 473.
14 Gordon, 473.
15 Gordon, 474.
16 Gordon, 474.
17 Gordon, 474.
18 Gordon, 474.
19 Gordon, 474.

"Now, the great injustice done by [the Dutchman] to the womanhood of his State was made manifest a few days later by the heroic conduct of one of Pennsylvania's noblest daughter," contended Gordon.[20] Federal troops had fired a bridge spanning the Susquehanna River at Wrightsville. The Confederates assumed possession of Wrightsville, and at a late hour, checked the fire which had gone out of control and burned several homes. The home that would have burned next contained a woman, which Gordon refers to as the "heroine of the Susquehanna."[21] Early the next morning the woman invited Gordon and his staff for breakfast, whereupon, noting her dignified and calm demeanor, he inquired of the woman if he had found a Southern sympathizer. Her response to Gordon follows:

> General Gordon, I cannot afford, sir, to have you misunderstand me, nor misinterpret this courtesy. You and your soldiers last night saved my home from burning, and I desired to give you this evidence of my appreciation; but my own honor and loyalty to my soldier husband demand that I tell you plainly that I am a Union woman--that my husband and son are both in the Union army with my approval, and that my daily prayer to Heaven is that the Union cause may triumph and our country be saved.[22]

Gordon reacted to the woman's response by praising her patriotism: "To my thought a woman with such courage of her convictions of duty to her country, and in the presence of a hostile army, deserves a lofty niche in patriotism's temple."[23]

Gordon uses this story first, as a tool of ingratiation, and second, as a prelude to his discussion of the Southern woman: "And now I am sure this generous audience will pardon me if I ask what words of mine could measure the gratitude due from me and my comrades who wore the gray, to glorious Southern women for their part in the great struggle."[24] Gordon describes their "Spartan courage and self-sacrifice. . . in every stage and trial of that war."[25] He continues by describing the scene of Southern

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20 Gordon, 474.
21 Gordon, 474.
22 Gordon, 475.
23 Gordon, 475.
24 Gordon, 475.
25 Gordon, 475.

women sending "their husbands and their fathers, their brothers and their sons to the front," witnessing the self-sacrifice and anguish, giving their beloved parting blessings:[26]

> I had seen those Southern women with the sick, the wounded, and the dying; and in the late stages of that war, I had been made to marvel at their *saintly spirit of martyrdom*, standing as it were, almost neck deep in the desolation around them, and yet bravely facing their fate while the light of Heaven itself played around their *divinely beautiful faces*. [Applause.][Italics mine]

This description of Southern women, in their glorious duty, takes on a pious aura; they acted as angels of mercy sent by God to ease Southern pain.

The result of this sequence is the compilation of the American woman, a combination of the glorious Southern woman and the heroine of Susquehanna. Gordon concludes:

> To my comrades, therefore, I submit this proposition, which I know their brave hearts to a man will echo. That proposition is, that these sufferings and sacrifices and devotion of the American women during that Titanic conflict must remain through all the ages as cherished a memorial as the rich libations of blood poured out by their brave brothers in battle. [Applause.][27]

Sequence Three

The third sequence considers Barlow and Ewell. Barlow was the general which Gordon had carried off the field during Gettysburg and vowed to deliver Barlow's last message to his wife. Each thought the other dead until a chance meeting fifteen years later. The result of this meeting was a true and lasting friendship between onetime combatants. The extensive story culminates as Gordon's demonstration that forgiveness is a valued and higher goal than resentment or bitterness. Aside from unity, brotherhood, and fraternity, friendship is a very important tool in reconciling differences, even if they are born of sectionalism.

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26 Gordon, 475.
27 Gordon, 476.

The story of Ewell is used as a relief from the culmination of the Barlow story, easing the crowd down from the emotional tension of the Barlow story. Agian, Gordon demonstrates his ability to raise a crowd to emotion and relief through humor. "Major General Francis C. Barlow"

During the first day of Gettysburg, while Gordon proceeded to Gettysburg from the Susquehanna, his command encountered the Union's right flank, driving them from the field. During the battle Gordon had noticed, "the proud form of that magnificient Union officer reel in the saddle and then fall in the white smoke of the battle" while leading a charge aginst the Confederates.[28] When the battle was over Gordon rode through the field, discovering that the officer was not dead, but barely alive. Gordon had the officer removed from the field to the shade of a nearby tree, where Gordon asked the officer, whose name was General Francis C. Barlow, if he had any last requests, assuming that he would die from his wounds shortly. Barlow asked Gordon to remove several of his wife's letters from his coat. Gordon describes the scene: ". . . as I opened one at his request, and his eye caught, as he supposed, for the last time, that wife's signature, the great tears came like a fountain and rolled down his pale face."[29] Barlow said to Gordon, as Gordon quotes:

> General Gordon, you are a Confederate; I am a Union soldier; but we are both Americans; if you should live through this dreadful war and ever see my wife, will you not do me the kindness to tell my wife that you saw me fall in this battle, and that her husband fell, not in the rear, but at the head of his column; tell her for me, General, that I freely give my life to my country, but that my unutterable grief is that I must now go without the privilege of seeing her once more, and bidding her a long and loving farewell.[30]

Gordon inquired as to were Mrs. Barlow could be found. She was with the Union army in the rear. This touched Gordon's heart, for his wife had travelled with him as well, whereupon he gave his word to Barlow:

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28 Gordon, 476.
29 Gordon, 477.
30 Gordon, 477.

> Of course, General Barlow, if I am alive, sir, when this day's battle, now in progress, is ended--if I am not shot dead before the night comes--you may die satisfied that I will see to it that Mrs. Barlow has your message before to-morrow's dawn. . . . And I did. [Applause.]

Under a flag of truce Mrs. Barlow was delivered through the lines to see her husband. Gordon believed Barlow to be dead. However, Barlow concluded not to die. Gordon states that "Providence decreed that he should live."[31] Barlow believed that Gordon was killed later, because Gordon's cousin of the same name fell in battle. Barlow was saddenned, reminding the staff around him that Gordon was the one who had picked him up from the battlefield and sent Barlow's wife to him that night.

Fifteen years passed. By now Gordon was a senator from Georgia. He had been invited to dinner by Clarkson Potter, a representative from New York. At dinner they rediscovered each other as being alive, not dead. Gordon describes the affect of the chance meeting with Barlow:

> But stranger still, perhaps, is the friendship true and lasting begun under such auspices. What could be further removed from the realm of probabilities than a confiding friendship between combatants, which is born on the field of blood, amidst the thunders of battle, and while the hostile legions rush upon each other with deadly fury and pour into each other's breasts their volleys of fire and of leaden hail. [Applause.] Such were the circumstances under which was born the friendship between Barlow and myself, an which I believe is more sincere because of its remarkable birth, and which has strengthened and deepened with the passing years. For the sake of our reunited and glorious Republic may we not hope that similar ties will bind together all the soldiers of the two armies,--indeed all Americans in perpetual unity until the last bugle call shal have summoned us to the eternal camping grounds beyond the stars? [Applause.]

Again, Gordon expresses his deep sentiment for national fraternity and brotherhood through the unity created by friendship where foes once lived.

"Lt. General Ewell and His Wooden Leg"

Gordon, after delivering an extended story of hardship and a moving reuniting of foes to friends, turns to, "Another incident of an entirely different character [which] may be worth relating, as illustrating the peculiarities and eccentricities of a

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31 Gordon, 478.

prominent Confederate officer."[32] During the battle of Gettysburg Gordon was riding with Ewell, who had a wooden leg to replace his own which he lost in a previous battle. At this time, Gordon heard the thud of a Minie ball. He inquired to Ewell if he had been hurt, to which Ewell replied:

> No, sir; but suppose that had been your leg; we would have had the trouble of carrying you off the field, sir. You see how much better prepared for a fight I am than you are. It doesn't hurt to be shot in a wooden leg, sir. [Laughter.][33]

Gordon uses humor well to balance the tone of the lecture, alternating humor with value-laden, moving passages.

Sequence Four

The Rapidan stood as a dividing line for sometime between the two armies. As told by Gordon, the armies were so close that the pickets refused to fire upon each other. As time progressed, the two armies began trade, since the Confederates had a steady supply of good tobacco, a luxury in the North, and the North had access to coffee, a rarity among Southern provisions. Thus, a type of international commerce came about as the armies traded with each other. The second story in this sequence centers around a Yankee who came across the river to visit with the Johnies. His rationale was that, since they were not fighting as the present, it seemed a good opportunity to pay the Johnies a call. All this is handled in a comical fashion by Gordon. The stories, designed with the use of irony, demonstrate commonalities where none had supposedly existed before. In the end all the privates were American privates, a brotherhood of a large fraternity, unified and friendly.

"The Life of a Private"

Gordon illustrates the life of a private in the war. In preparation for his stories he describes the private by recalling the "uncomplaining suffereing, the unbought and poorly paid patriotism of those grand men, the American volunteers. . . [for] I would

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32 Gordon, 479.
33 Gordon, 480.

gladly write their names in characters of blazing stars that could never grow dim."[34] By now the theme of national fraternity has enveloped the lecture as he delivers the next sequence of narratives.

The stories center around the Rapidan, a creek which was used as the dividing line between the two armies. In the first story, Gordon describes the proximity in which the army pickets were posted, so close as a matter of fact that "the armies refused to fire at each other by common consent."[35] Gordon states:

> When they did shoot, they shot jokes instead of rifles aross the river at each other, and where the water was shallow they waded in and met each other in the middle and swapped Southern tobacco for Yankee coffee. . . . Thus those two fighting armmies kept up for a long time their friendly and international commerce. So great was the commerce that the commanders of both armies ordered it to stop. As a matter of course, the privates ignored the orders, and went on trading.[36]

Soon after General Lee ordered Gordon to take charge of the picket line in an effort to stop the trading. Patrolling, Gordon came upon some suspicious looking group of soldiers at the bank, who seemed very nervous. Gordon questioned them, then rode aways, looked back and noticed some commotion in the weeds, whereupon he found "there flat on the ground among those weeds was at least six feet of soldier with scarcely any clothing in his person."[37] After questioning the soldier, he explained how he didn't mean any harm and had just come across to visit the "Johnies." Gordon, in describing the story, concluded:

> The idea of this Union boy, that because we were not at this minute shooting each other to death, it was a proper occasion to lay aside the arms and make social visits, one army to another, struck me as the most laughable kind of war I had ever heard of; and I could scarcely keep my face straight enough to give an order.[38]

"Where else could you find it?" Gordon asks of his audience, supplying the answer, in the form of a question, that, "Among what people would it be possible except among

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34 Gordon, 481.
35 Gordon, 482.
36 Gordon, 482.
37 Gordon, 482.
38 Gordon, 483.

this glorious American people, uplifted by our free institutions and by that Christian civilization which was born in Heaven? [Applause.]"[39] Gordon uses irony in these stories to demonstrate the "glorious American people." The Union soldier, who may have shooting at the Confederate soldier the day before, was now casually visiting with those same enemies. Gordon's description of this story as a "most laughable kind of war" makes a strong point by combining the horror of war and pleasantries of a social call. It is ironic that enmity could be laid by the wayside so easily; only in a "Christian civilization" could this happen. The theme of brotherhood is, therefore, extended.

Sequence Five

The fifth sequence is a sequence of events in one narrative. A Union band, after a long day of dress parades, played "Yankee Doodle" as the army prepared for the night. The Federals gave out a great shout. As a courtesy, the band then played "Dixie" for the Confederates just across the river, which received a great shout as well. Finally, the band played "Home, Sweet Home" to which all the homesick troops sang along. Although a quick narrative, it plays with two powerful points. The first point plays on the commonality of troops who sang together, even though they were foes. The second point is that of home, as described by the song they sang. The idea of home and homesickness demonstrates a common desire for all the soldiers. This is a reconciling theme, since a return to home represents an end to the war. Everyone in the audience can draw an archetypal image of home, whether the listener had participated in war or not.

"The Union Band"

Gordon continues his use of irony in a story about the Union band which was at the Rapidan. At the close of a day when the armies were holding dress parades on opposite hills bordering the Rapidan the Union band played, with great spirit,

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39 Gordon, 483.

"Yankee Doodle." The Federal troops responded with patriotic shouts. The Union band, then, played "Dixie," to which the Southerners gave a mighty response. Gordon describes what happened next:

> A few moments later, when the stars had come out as witnesses and when all nature was in harmony, there came from the same band the old melody, "Home, Sweet Home." As its familiar and pathetic notes rolled over the water and thrilled through the spirits of the soldiers, the hills reverberated with a thundering response from the united voices of both armies. [Applause.][40]

Even though the armies were foes, they both, according to this passage, missed their homes. This is an important commonality, for Gordon is able to use every listener's vision of home as something good and desireful. Again, the use of common themes continues to promote the reconciliation of sectionalism.

Sequence Six

By now Gordon had set the basework to present the greatest, most-revered hero of the Civil War--General Robert E. Lee. Lee has become the embodiment of all that is good in the South, a form of synecdoche. The narrative demonstrates the duty and honor of this synecdochal man as he rode forth to take the salient in Spottsylvania. So electrified and devoted were the Confederates by this act of Lee, according to Gordon, that the Confederates recaptured the salient with a mighty blow.

Gordon also describes Lee at the last Confederate council of war as a man who maintained his dignity and calm in the face of misfortune. The point Gordon is constructing is the compilation of the ultimate version of a Southerner and his characteristics. Immediately thereafter Gordon attends to constructing an image of Grant, the Northern war hero. Describing Appomattox, Gordon compares the two great leaders, idealizing their characteristics as those that every American should have. The addition to his compendium of themes gives the individual character a

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[40] Gordon, 484.

solid set of values and beliefs in dealing with his fellow man in pursuit of unity, brotherhood, and fraternity.

"General Robert E. Lee"

Gordon moves the lecture away from the private's life into a sequence of stories focused on the loci of all that was South. He begins by describing General Lee's first encounter with Grant at Spottsylvania. In an attempt to describe General Lee, his devotion to duty, and the devotion the soldiers held for Lee, Gordon accounts the events shortly thereafter Hancock captured the salient in Spottsylvania:

> Here Lee, with his army cut in twain, rode into the breach, and like Napoleon at Lodi, placed himself at the head of his reserves, resolved to recapture the salient or fall in the effort. Here, as he sat upon his horse in front of my lines, his head uncovered, his hat in hand, his face rigid and fixed upon the advancing foe, the Confederate soldiers exhibited that deathless devotion to his person which knew no diminution even to the end.[41]

Gordon, riding up next to Lee, told him that this was not the place for the General to be. The soldiers heard this and began to chant, pushing Lee and his horse to the back of the lines. "Here, under the inspiration of his majestic and magnetic presence," narrates Gordon, "occurred that furious counter-charge which swept forward with the resistless power of a cyclone, bearing all things down before it, driving Hancock back, and retaking a large portion of the salient."[42] Demonstrating Southern devotion and courage, Gordon prepares groundwork for conclusion based on the major theme. With a touch of humor, the conclusion follows:

> Whether as these boys in blue claimed, they were beginning them to whip us into submission or, as our boys claimed, we were simply wearing ourselves out whipping them [laughter] is a matter of no consequence new. . . . [The] thought is this: that for the future glory of this Republic, it is absolutely immaterial whether on this battlefield or that the blue or the gray won a great victory, for, thanks by to God, every victory won in that war by either side was a monument to American valor. [Applause.][43]

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41 Gordon, 485.
42 Gordon, 485.
43 Gordon, 486.

Finally, Gordon moves to alleviate the idea of loss completely from each side by concluding that all battles were won by *Americans*, regardless of leadership.

Maintaining dignity after a loss is important for a true reconciliation of sectionalism and building of fraternity. To demonstrate dignity in loss Gordon describes the last Confederate council of war. It was the night before Appomattox and the officers met gathered at Lee's bivouac fire. They sat on blankets on the ground and discussed the end. Gordon describes the scene:

> A painter's brush might transfer to canvas the physical features of that scene, but no tongue or pen could describe the unutterable anguish of those broken-hearted commanders as they sat around their beloved leader and looked into his now clouded face and sought to draw from it some ray of hope. I shall not attempt to describe that scene; but I would be untrue to myself and to Lee's memory if I did not say of him that in no hour of that great war did his masterful characteristics appear to me so conspicuous as they did then and there; as he stood inthat lonely woodland, by that low-burning fire, surrounded by his broken followers; and yet stood so grandly, so calmly facing and discussing the long-dreaded inevitable.[44]

Even in the face of defeat the leader of the Confederacy maintained composure, an example and inspiration to all the Southerners who cherish honor and pride in the South.

"Appomattox and the End"

Gordon recounts the surrender of Lee at Appomattox, contending that anyone who was not aware of the facts would have thought the vanquished the victor and vice versa. Again, using irony as a juxtaposing dialectic, Gordon describes Lee, then Grant:

> There stood Lee dressed (as a mark of respect to Grant) in his best uniform, unbent by misfortune, sustaining by his example the spirits of his defeated comrades and illustrating in his calm and lofty bearing the noble adage which he afterwards announced, that 'the virture of humanity ought always to equal its trials'. . . . [T]he goal of his ambition was not glory, but duty, and only duty, that it was true of him as of few men who have ever lived that distance in his case did not

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[44] Gordon, 489.

> lend enchantment, but that the nearer you approached him the greater and grander he grew.[45]

Of Grant, Gordon said:

> Grave, unassuming, and considerate, there was upon his person no mark of rank; there was about him no air of triumph nor trace of exultation. . . . [He] evidently sought to withdraw, if in his power, the bitter sting of defeat from the quivering sensibilities of his great antagonist.[46]

Gordon argues that Grant rose even higher in his declaration of the inviolability of protecting power of Lee's parole, "invoking with almost his dying lips, the spirit of peace, equality, fraternity, and unity among all of his countrymen."[47] Transforming these great images of the leaders of both armies, Gordon uses the characteristics as the basis for the way future generations ought to live. This comparison, using Lee and Grant, reiterates Gordon's sentiment for sectional reconciliation and national fraternity.

Transformative Discourse and Rhetorical Vision

Why did the South receive and adore the lecture and its speaker as much as the North did? Gordon, like many of the New South spokesmen, played with duality with no sense of inconsistency.[48] The construction of the speech allows any listener, whether North or South, to take pride in the events of their own army and soldiers, as well as those actions and traits of truly American soldiers. In other words, an audience member could selectively listen to the anecdotes, savoring the ones with the most meaning to themselves. The reason Gordon became such a prominent figure of the New South and producer of the myth of the Old South and the Lost Cause, then, was that he preached reconciliation to the Northern ear and glory of battles past to the

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45 Gordon, 491, 492.
46 Gordon, 492.
47 Gordon, 493.
48 C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1951) 157.

Southern ear. Every sequence in the lecture contains elements for both. The result of this strategy is what I call "transformative discourse."

Transformative discourse is the creation of argument with the purpose to reconcile audience perceptions from prejudiced positions to commonality. Through the use of humor as ingratiation, the orator juxtaposes positions in a dialectic, using irony to present progressive commonalities to the audience, thus shaking the auditor from the prejudiced perception.

Gordon's aim was to transform the attitudes and beliefs of his listeners so that sectionalism would be washed away and replaced with sense of brotherhood, fraternity and unity, the major themes of the lecture, through his use of humor and irony.

At the base of this argument is the philosophy that true reconciliation of conflict not only calls for the resolution of the conflict, but progress towards a relationship built of trust and respect. One of the essential aspects of this philosophy is the act of face saving, where no party loses face in the resolution of the conflict. Gordon aided the South, through the utilization of myths of the Old South and, particularly, the Lost Cause, in saving face. Through the narratives the Northern listener could relish the win, while the Southerners were able to feel the glory again of fighting for what they believed in. Thus, like Faulkner describes, every fourteen year old Southern boy could return to the time when it was in the balance, maintaining dignity in the face of defeat.

In analyzing the lecture, I decided to test Gordon's avowed motive against the major themes found in the lecture. The method, then, was that of composing a rhetorical vision from the text. First, recall Gordon's motive as discussed in the first chapter. Gordon claims that he was out of politics altogether and that his message was one of brotherly love and reconciliation.

In the beginning of the lecture Gordon clearly states that his purpose is to place higher aims over personal considerations. His stated goal was to "strengthen the sentiment of national fraternity as an essential element of national unity."[49] He intended to do this by illustrating the spirit and character of the American soldier and people. Gordon even makes reference to the synecdochal symbol--his devotion to the flag of the Republic. The conclusion of the lecture describes that very symbol as the "proud banner of freedom."[50] The six major sequences all demonstrate some aspect of the compendium Gordon proposes to use towards reconciling differences: national fraternity, unity, brotherhood, friendship, womanhood, and characteristics of the ideal American are just some of those values. Therefore, Gordon is true to his motive in the rhetorical vision of the lecture--for the most part.[51]

Gordon, in introducing himself, immediately describes his purpose for delivering his lecture as being "higher aims than mere personal considerations."[52] It is his declared intention to "suggest certain beneficient results of our sectional war. . . add any new facts illustrative of the character of Grant, or. . . aid in lifting to a higher plane the popular estimate placed by victors and vanquished upon their countrymen of the opposing section."[53] The higher aim previously mentioned, then, is to "strengthen the sentiment of national fraternity as an essential element of national unity."[54]

Gordon ingratiates himself to the crowd, which, according to this published copy, solicited applause:[55]

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49 John Brown Gordon, "The Last Days of the Confederacy," Ed. Thomas B. Reed in Modern Eloquence, (Philadelphia: John D Morris and Company, 1900) 471.

50 Gordon, 494.

51 As with the interpretation of the narratives, the analysis of selected anecdotes have been included as evidentiary material.

52 John Brown Gordon, "The Last Days of the Confederacy," Ed. Thomas B. Reed in Modern Eloquence, (Philadelphia: John D. Morris and Company, 1900) 471.

53 Gordon, 471.

54 Gordon, 471.

55 Gordon, 471; This copy of the lecture was a recitation of the lecture given in Brooklyn, New York on February 1, 1901. At certain points the copy denotes audience reaction to the lecture.

> Let me say before beginning my lecture that although you are to listen to-night to a Southern man, a Southern soldier, yet I beg you to believe that he is as true as any man to this Republic's flag and to all that is truly represents. [Applause.][56]

The ingratiation preludes the major theme of the lecture, as it is not his intention to speak of great battles or analyze causes of the Confederacy's decline, but to "speak of those less grave but scarcely less important phases or incidents of the war which illustrate the spirit and character of the American soldier and people."[57] This demonstrates that Gordon's "higher aim" is focused on the reconciliation of sectional attitudes towards national fraternity and American unity.

Gordon, in concluding his lecture, uses his theme, by compressing the messages, to demonstrate the nation's duty to act as a vanguard for freedom and humanity through unity:

> Emerging from this era of passion, of strife, and of carnage, with a national life more robust, a national peace more secure, and a national union more complete and enduring, we call the fettered millions of earth to follow our lead and strike for republican liberty. As the vanguard, the color-bearers in the march of nations, we lift aloft this proud banner of freedom and bid universal humanity to catch its inspiration. [Applause.][58]

With this mission before the nation, Gordon recounts the elements that have allowed the nation to arrive at such priceless peace and stature: the Fathers who bequeathed the nation its priceless heritage; the deeds of Northern heros; the sacrifices endured by Southern womanhood; the dauntless courage of the South's sons. By all these:

> [W]e unite in solemn compact that this American people shall know intestine war no more; but shall forever remain an unbroken brotherhood from sea to sea. By all these, and by the resistless fiat of an inexorable American sentiment, we proclaim that the American flag shall protect every American citizen on all oceans and in all lands. [Applause.][59]

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56 Gordon, 471.
57 Gordon, 472.
58 Gordon, 494.
59 Gordon, 494.

The symoblism of the flag again represents Gordon's idea of omnipotence of the nation through unification, national fraternity, and the reconciliation of sectionalism. The new power, represented by the flag, must be tempered with moral duty and characteristics of the those who fought in this Civil War:

> . . . whatever by the geographical limits over which destiny decrees it to float as the symbol of our national sovereignty, there shall at least be no boundaries to its moral sway; but as long as political truth triumphs or liberty survives this flag of our Fathers shall remain the proudest and most potential emblem of human freedom in all the world. [Loud applause.][60]

In conclusion, Gordon's aim was to transform the positions of sectionalism that existed after the Civil War. In testing his motive, I found his rhetorical vision to be what he described; a motive of higher good and national fraternity and unity. By transforming sectionalist positions he was, through the use of his personal accounts of the Civil War, transforming the bloodiest war in American history into a majestical trial, illustrating the glorified spirit and character of the American soldier and people.

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60 Gordon, 494.

CHAPTER FOUR

Evaluation of Study

Limitations of Study

The study of Gordon's "Last Days of the Confederacy" was limited in the following ways. The expanse of literature available through the Oregon State University and University of Oregon libraries was limited to major works on Southern mythology only, with a small portion dedicated to Southern oratory. While other sources exist, I was unable to retrieve those sources do to financial impossibilities. I may note for the reader that Louisiana State University and University of Georgia at Athens both have extensive libraries containing materials pertinent to this study. For these reasons I was forced to rely a great deal on secondary citations. The greatest example of this limitation is the review of contemporary literature and news reports, wherein I relied on Dorgan's article for most of my newspaper reports.

Another potential limitation to the study is the depth of the interpretation. While analyzing the lecture according to the system set forth in the methodology I focused on the primary aspects of each narrative, omitting smaller, more irrelevant facets. For example, if a particular narrative focused on specific characters I would disregard an in depth analysis of the scene or setting. I believe that a rote, eternal naming of minor details diverts attention from the thrust of the narrative and did not wish to limit or bore the reader. Instead, I proceeded in what I felt was a succinct manner to the point.

The Methodology

When I first read "The Last Days of the Confederacy" it was recommended to me to study Walter Fisher's narrative paradigm as a potential method of criticism. I admit I was not enthusiastic about the method at first, for I found it hard to convert to

a useable methodology. For this reason I decided to include Sonja Foss' work on the narrative paradigm. The combination provided both theory and utility.

The nature of the lecture suggested to me that I study Gordon's vision. In other words, I wanted to know if he really believed in sectional reconciliation or if the lecture was a means of attracting Northern dollars to Southern industry. The question arose when I considered his position as governor of Georgia and his three terms in the United State Senate. Politics was an old game to him by 1890.

The last component, the use of Burke's tropes, came from the first reading of the lecture. Immediately I noticed a pattern demonstrating the use of synecdochal archetypes in juxtaposed dialectics to create one theme. In other words, one Northerner and one Southerner make two Americans, or Grant and Lee were the two greatest American generals ever.

Finally, I was concerned with the execution of the methodology in terms of "bracketing activity," a concept created by Karl Weick. Weick, in a manner I find confronting to rhetorical criticism, states:

> When you pull out some portion of the text of the speech from its surrounding context, then the environment that you have bracketed for inspection is a differet environment than the original one that contained. . . [the] surrounding text. The reader of the extracted portion does see part of herself because her own interests influenced the process of extracting. And this is true whether those biases suggest that speeches are better at the end than at the beginning. . ."[1]

For this reason I tried to maintain the contextual integrity of the lecture by utilizing a more wholistic approach, constructing sequences of anecdotes within greater themes, rather than picking at the lecture for bracketed details.

Future Areas of Research

From the initial reading of the lecture I knew that I wanted to demonstrate Gordon's belief in a higher good. While many played the role of sectionalist I was intrigued by his vision to transform two opposing positions into one unified position.

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[1] Karl Weick, The Social Psychology of Organizing (New York: Random House, 1979) 154.

Therefore, with my own vision of this thesis I designed the components of the methodology to create a methodological system which could be applied to other speeches or lectures in which the orator brings together opposing factions into one unified force or theme, such as the ceremonial orator.

Contribution to Rhetoric

If I may be so bold as to say that I may contribute work to the greater compendium of rhetorical studies then tranformative discourse is such a contribution. While it may never be used again, the system stands ready for one who may seek to study the rhetorical strategies of the ceremonial reconciliatory orator or other transforming discourses.

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